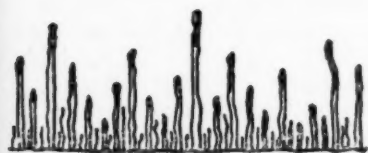




**W**ITH politics at national level closely tied to such drab subjects as power vacuums, Middle East cauldrons, What-is-Russia-up-to-now? and the especially boring business of ram-jet anti-aircraft defence, the local council elections whose six thousand seats are now being contested give electors a chance to get a finger in more personal pies. National voters have for some time had doubts whether an X in the right place will do much towards stopping Sir William Penney's boys from blasting the heart out of Christmas Island, and in fact such remote flights of political tomfoolery seem far removed from the influence of those who will foot the bill. For the local voter there are issues to get really worked up about, and to some effect. Let us hope for some impassioned oratory this week about the provision of bus shelters, the siting of refuse dumps, the compulsory mowing of grass verges, the deodorization of pigsties, and that great talking point in parts of Sussex (Mr. Macmillan's week-end county)—are the authorities serious in their threat to discontinue the emptying of pail closets after the first of July?

### Let's Start a Million Fires

COMMERCIAL radio in this country consists at the moment only of inter-programme advertising by Government



departments: the dying fall that ends the News has scarcely faded before listeners are urged to become Sea Scouts, or devote their leisure to acting as unconscious Civil Defence casualties. When commercial radio proper gets under way, as recently foretold by

Mr. Norman Collins, techniques will have to be brushed up. The Forestry Commission's current appeal, for instance, warns against forest fires with the admonition: "Remember! One tree can be used to make a million matchsticks!"

### Cheaper, Too

FASHION reporters have made an exaggerated song-and-dance over the Paris news that large printed hats are to be all the rage this summer. We've had these at Wimbledon for years.

### Nothing Sacred

EXPERTS in photographic interpretation have been opening up a rich new seam during the last year or two by providing newspaper caption writers with the unspoken thoughts of the Royal children. Blurred portraits of Princess Anne entitled, "Where's father got to?" and of the Duke of Cornwall



entitled, "These windcheater jackets are great" can only pretend to an approximate representation of the actual thoughts registered at the time—which indeed, on almost any similar occasion, are more likely to take the form, "There's that man in a dirty hat with a camera." It is to be hoped that Palace authorities will seek an ending to this practice. Royalty has a hard enough time already, having to be on constant guard about what it says and how it looks. To have to think right thoughts all the time is too much.

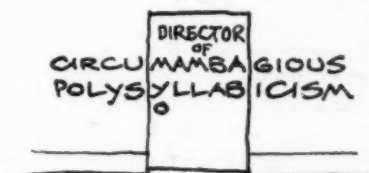
### Pennies from Heaven

ALARM at the nation's growing godlessness, evident for some time from

empty churches and more recently heightened by newspaper surveys, was checked over a large area of Cheshire the other day with the news that Stockport Corporation had abolished Sunday workmen's fares on the buses as the concession had been "abused by people going to church."

### Got Something There

One of the more serious Sunday papers has published an amateur traffic



expert's suggestions for improving conditions at Hyde Park Corner by rearranging things on a principle of "directional channelization." Ministry of Transport officials are said to be impressed, anyhow, by the chap's mastery of the lingo.

### Safety in Special Numbers

JOURNALISTS' views on atomic warfare, hitherto running to pessimism, took a turn for the better when it was learnt that the latest Civil Defence exercise in Washington will involve two helicopters to evacuate President Eisenhower, his staff, and "an emergency pool of journalists."

### Might Have Been the Tube

NEWSPAPERS have been obliged to abandon their patronizing attitude towards television for one of liberal and respectful coverage. But one of them went a little too far when it reported how a Slough mother, surprised out of her afternoon viewing stupor by the screen's suddenly going dead, discovered her scullery in flames "just in time to pull her ten-month-old

son . . . to safety" . . . and headlined it  
"ONE-EYED MONSTER' SAVES A LIFE."

### No Real Solution

AMERICAN business-men are uncertain about the proposal to force chief executives to take one week's holiday



in seven, thus avoiding ulcers, heart attacks and the consequences of worry. The snag is the risk of ulcers and heart attacks as a consequence of worrying what the hell's going on while they're away.

### Pump in the Night

IN many people the Ministry of Supply's triumphs with ground-to-air lethal techniques have produced an eerie disquiet more usually associated with a revulsion from the supernatural. To loose into the skies a mechanism-packed cylinder with a built-in homing instinct, and leave it to seek out its prey and destroy it, seems the sort of distasteful enterprise that should have been left to the pages of Mr. H. G. Wells. Luckily, the scientific correspondent of *The Observer* has come out with half a column of heart's ease on this, assuring the squeamish that all such claims are exaggerated, that any successes so far have only been recorded against balloons and loitering "drones," that reports of a hundred miles' range are more likely to be true at twenty, and that, what with one thing and another, those old-fashioned World War II armaments fitted to fighter aircraft "are still likely to be needed for several years." This ought to prove a valued tranquillizer—except for born worriers who will now want to see a similar piece about Russian progress in this field, by the scientific correspondent of *Pravda*.

### A Great Un-American

McCarthy gone

And no tears shed? A pity.

They all fell earlier on  
In Committee.

## WE SHALL MISS YOU

EXCEPTING the population of the United States of America and the less numerous people in Ireland, almost nobody, except the Foreign Offices and Diplomatic Corps of the turning globe, is much interested in the strange case of Scott McLeod. And in this these populations err. For by an unpleasing but ineluctable chance of history this wizened brooder on the international scene has set, or may at any moment set, quite a precedent.

Refreshing everyone's memory, let it be recalled that McLeod, in his position at the State Department, was the man who seemed ever ready to do anything that the late Senator McCarthy seemed not quite able to do for himself.

Obeing, no doubt, some form of obsessive compulsion, he lately drew attention to himself by playing a role in the piece of public diplomacy which led to the suicide of the Canadian representative in Cairo and to a less nice state of diplomatic relations between Canada and the United States than had existed hitherto.

So far, so good, Foster Dulles seems to have thought—all in the day's work. However, there were those in Washington who said "A great guy, McLeod, and we esteem him. Is there any way of sending him about two thousand or more miles away?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Dulles, "we shall make him our Ambassador to

Ireland." And so it was announced. It was at this point that the precedent part of the business began. A section of the Irish press, led by the *Irish Times*, started to say that of course the American Government could do anything it chose, but if they supposed that decent people in the diplomatic and social life of Dublin were going to be happy to have the coppers' narks at their cocktail and dinner parties they were making a serious mistake.

Shaking its fine mane of whitening hair, the *Irish Times* reckoned that if this kind of thing went on, diplomatic life—which plays so large a role in the amenities of Dublin—would become impossible. The *Times* thought that an Ambassador who was supposed to have been responsible, indirectly, for the suicide of the former representative of a friendly power might take a little of the bloom off the caviar.

Others, less interested, one may think, in McLeod than in supporting Mr. de Valera, who had, perhaps while thinking about something else, given his *agrément*, then put forward the proposition that whatever the proposed Ambassador had or had not done was no business of Ireland's. The thing to do was to forget all that and just treat the envoy as a decent man until he did anything that would demonstrate the contrary.

That is why this thing sets a precedent. There used to be a term *persona grata*. Which same term was held, in the bad old days, to imply the existence of its opposite. You were still, in those days, permitted to state that even an American was, so far as you were concerned, *persona* totally, if so coarse an expression may be excused, *non grata*.

The outlook for the smaller capitals is bleak. For it is now, apparently, going to become diplomatic usage that when a man makes an intolerable nuisance of himself in Whitehall, or cannot be asked to meet anyone at the Quai d'Orsay, he is sent to Montevideo or Dublin.

And since both Montevideo and Dublin are nice places to be, it is not unreasonable to suppose that with this precedent established we shall soon see a sharp rise in the delinquency rate at the Quai d'Orsay, Whitehall, and the State Department. C. C.



"And don't go by Arc-en-Ciel or we'll be back in Brixham Harbour."



DULLES OF ARABIA



# Paz, Orden

By HONOR TRACY

IN Spain true peace and order are to be found. That is what the Spanish papers said, and I saw no reason to doubt it. On the whole I incline to believe in the printed word until it is shown to be wrong. The first statement I ever read in my life was to the effect that the cat sat on the mat, and immediately above it, in incontrovertible proof of its veracity, was a picture of the cat engaged in doing so. A happy experience of this kind at an impressionable age is apt to leave its mark. My first night in Spain I settled down to sleep assured that the Spanish papers and my primer were in the same great tradition.

It was about half-past one, and it apparently had been decided that the hour was a good one for holding motorcycle races in the street below. Apparently, too, those taking part regarded a silencer on the exhaust as effeminate.

Every fifteen minutes or so the cistern in the bathroom collected its powers and flushed the toilet of its own free will, with a boom as of distant gun-fire. Neither of these circumstances was enough to invalidate the newspapers' argument, because noise that sends the limp northerner frantic merely makes the Spaniard feel comfortable and at home.

But then a peculiar, as it were a circular, howling arose at the end of the street and unsteadily drew nearer, and for this only one explanation seemed possible. With Spanish indifference to the pain of animals some wretch had tied a cat in a bag and was whirling it round and round in the air. Miaow-wow-wow-wow! It was more than an English lady abroad could endure. I threw off the bed-clothes and raced to the window to plead the animal's cause, to find nobody in sight but a drunkard,

singing *flemenco*. This was really disturbing, for I knew from the books of various experts that drunkards are never seen in Spain. I knew that Spaniards are frugal, austere people with a tremendous feeling for human dignity. Eeaaow-wow-wow-wow! Just below my window he paused and supported himself against a street-lamp, howling with all the force of his austere and frugal lungs. A neighbouring clock struck two with a note of thunder. In the salon downstairs someone started to play the piano. The cistern fretfully discharged itself, as if vexed at the competition.

As I carried a pitcher of water to the window with a view to recalling the drunk to paz and orden a taxi drove up to the front door. A tall thin man in an old-fashioned cloak stepped out of it and a short, thin man in a beret and leather jacket got down from the driver's seat. A conversation began, quietly at first but growing louder and more explosive until the pair of them were shouting together at the tops of their voices. They stood and shouted there as if they were the only two men in the world. They were bellowing like angry bulls. Every now and then, to mark a point, the man in the cloak would open the taxi door and slam it shut with all his might, while the driver, not to be outdone, would sound a war-cry on his klaxon. After that they shouted and waved their arms again.

"Mogstrous! Ridiculous! Have you no shame?" the man in the cloak kept bawling.

"I have been driving for thirty years!" shouted the man in the beret.

"You haven't been driving me for thirty years, thank God! In decent times one had one's own equipment."

"Everything goes up. Petrol, tyres, taxes."

"Just from the corner of San Miguel to this hotel! The effrontery!" and he opened and slammed the door.

"How am I supposed to live? I haven't eaten all day!" shrieked the driver, to a furious accompaniment on the horn.

Eeaaow-wow-wow-wow! carolled the drunk.

Both parties now repeated several times over the remarks they had made





before, with amplifications and embellishments and a number of highly technical terms. Neither paid much attention to the argument of the other, preferring to maintain by simple reiteration the thread of his own reasoning. It was notable that when their paths did cross the exchanges were peculiarly edged.

"I picked you up coming out of the Café Granada. Coffee! I haven't tasted it since the Liberation."

"And well I believe it! The Liberation must have meant some changes for you."

"What are you saying? What do you dare to suggest? I am in the Movement."

"No doubt. I have heard they are not particular."

But the discipline of this give-and-take wearied them almost at once. Soon each was pursuing his private thoughts again.

"Very likely you imagine I am a foreigner."

"Coffee at one hundred and fifty the kilo, and the lousy fellow won't pay his fare!"

"Or a Minister, perhaps? Yes, that's it. It must be the holes in my cloak that made you think so."

Ahiii-yi-yi-yah! chanted the drunk mournfully.

The cistern flushed itself.

"Nothing but brigands everywhere! You would think it was Africa."

"I have driven for thirty years, and no complaints."

The din continued with mounting fury for twenty minutes by my watch, supported by the motor-cycles, the flamenco and the plumbing. Suddenly and absolutely I had had enough of these mighty Spanish voices reverberating endlessly through the night. At a quarter to three I passionately craved some of the paz and orden described in the papers. Leaning out of the window I called to the pair as sweetly as could be managed by someone trembling with rage.

"Oiga!" I said, "would the gentlemen be good enough to hold their conference elsewhere, thus permitting their servant to sleep?"

If the sky had opened and the angel of the Lord himself had delivered the message it could not have had a more potent effect. An appalled silence fell on them both. They stood there gazing upwards, united at last in stupefaction.



Next they stared at each other, as if wondering could they have heard me aright. Then the man in the cloak looked upwards again.

"Señora," he said, with superb male dignity, "do you not see? *Estamos litigando*."

"That is so," assented the man in the beret.

They joined battle afresh as if nothing had happened.

"Hombre! do you pay or do I call the Guardia?"

"All you people are out of your minds these days."

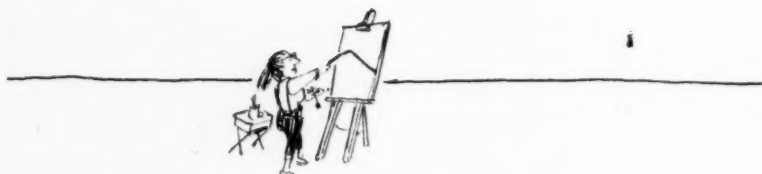
"Enjoys himself all the evening, and then refuses to pay the taxi. And I am hungry."

"From the corner of San Miguel to here! I did it only a month ago and it cost me ten pesetas."

"A month ago is a month ago, caballero. You know what is happening to-day."

"Twelve pesetas for a step like that? Bah!"

All my anger melted away like snow in August, to be followed by a rush of something akin to awe. This Homeric affray was being waged for a matter of



*Silverstein*

two pesetas. These men were dreamers, poets. As happens so often in Spain, I was carried away by the sheer magnificence of their lunacy. Yet I clung to my ambition of getting an hour or two of sleep that night. Accordingly I leaned out of the window once again.

"I shall be delighted, honoured," I said, in the diffident tone appropriate to my sex, "if the gentlemen will allow me to pay the balance."

If the angel of the Lord had thrown a tub of water over them they could not have been more taken aback. For the second time they were plunged into a

deep and horrified silence. Now they did not even glance up at the window, but stood there wordlessly eyeing each other. Something had happened that was too distressing and shameful for speech. At last the man in the cloak slowly put his hand in his pocket and drew out some money. The man in the beret received it with averted head, and slowly got into his car. With a glorious swirl of folds the other flung his cape about his shoulders and stalked into the hotel.

I went back to bed and wakefully meditated, amid the relative peace of the cistern, the drunk, the clocks of the town and the roar of the motor-cycles. At first my thoughts were tinged with a certain hostility towards the Spanish papers. It did appear as if they had fallen somewhat short of the standards established so clearly and beautifully by the primer. But then another solution presented itself. There might after all be paz and orden in Spain, heaps and heaps of paz and orden: so much that now and again, at dead of night, two souls would battle for two pesetas as if their lives depended on it.

## 1857

MINDLESS of benefits heaped on them since Plassey,  
Duped by the lies of men in fact their foes,  
In the hot peace of a Meerut Sunday evening,  
Treacherous as a snake, the sepoys rose

And slew the gallant at overwhelming odds,  
And murdered the innocent and raped the pure,  
And all because of some superstitious nonsense  
At worst unspeakable and at best obscure.

Then came hopeless and defiant defences,  
And Residency flags kept flying day and night,  
And hordes held at bay by heroic handfuls  
Till the stern inexorable triumph of the right.

That was the nursery version. Some time later  
Earnest men sold me the other view—  
Patriots turning in wrath on foreign masters,  
The afflicted many against the tyrannous few,

Amateur English war-lords out for vengeance,  
Cold-blooded murder of innocent kings' sons,

Care-faced looting, bloody drum-head assizes  
And endless, abject prisoners blown from guns.

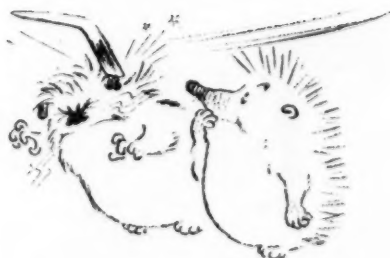
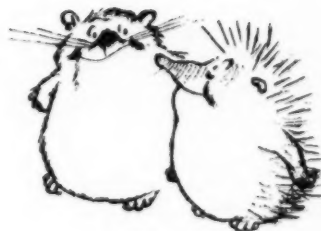
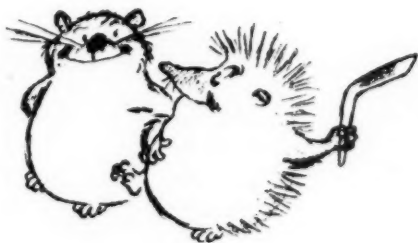
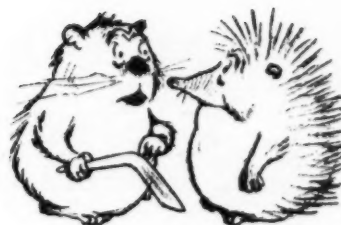
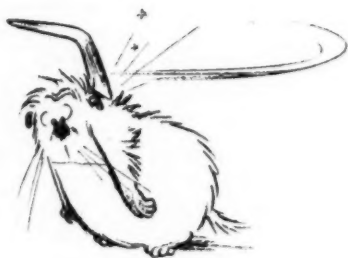
Later again the thing seemed less important,  
Obsolete evils hardly worth the fuss  
(And the Punjab always taking it slightly smugly,  
None of it having really happened to us.)

The parish pump was bigger than past excesses,  
However sad, and the keeping of old scores  
Barred by the bare doing of routine justice  
And arduous, endless administrative chores.

That in its turn is over. Routine justice  
Rings as faint as the echo of drowned bells.  
But the Mutiny leaps from the page with sudden brilliance,  
Sodden with well-remembered sounds and smells:

An old tale bedevilled with propaganda  
But full of emotional overtones supplied  
By the inescapable loves and hates of countries  
Wildly different and indissolubly tied.

P. M. HUBBARD



CROVANNETTI



# Oh, Horror, Horror, Horror!

I WRITE in the fraught lull which precedes the London première of a film called *The Curse of Frankenstein*. I shall be there, of course, as a critic; but my point is that I don't need to be because I already know the film intimately through having shared a house with the composer who wrote its background music.

Such foreknowledge is not quite so intuitive as it may sound. When from my upstairs study—I have a study upstairs because the composer says my typing distracts him—I hear this sort of chord on the piano:



I realize that something pretty nasty must be happening on the "visual track" (like Frankenstein sewing-in the Monster's eyeballs) but I wouldn't be able to tell you precisely what, unless I'd also seen the composer's time-sheets.

I first became aware of the existence of these time-sheets when my friend, who had just drained himself dry of

horror-music by composing the score for *The Quatermass Experiment*, was put instantly under contract to compose more horror-music for *X the Unknown*. I thought things had been very quiet in the music-room all morning; and when I looked in around lunch-time I found him staring dispiritedly at a foolscap typescript on top of the piano. The typescript was divided into two columns: one consisting of terse but vivid little sentences describing episodes which were to appear on the screen, and the other listing the number of seconds' worth of music required to accompany each episode. The particular item which was taxing my friend's inspiration read:

7 secs. The Doctor's face steams and melts.

After that, a whole new sparkling world opened radiantly on the horizons of my leisure; and when my friend's success with *X the Unknown* provoked a demand that he should write the score for *Quatermass II*, I rescued each time-sheet (as he discarded it) and three weeks later was able to curl up contentedly in bed with the whole bundle of them as other people might curl up with Proust:

Quatermass stops, looking round for Bradhead.

Quatermass shouts "Bradhead!"



By PAUL DEHN

Quatermass shouts "BRADHEAD!"  
We hear scream off.  
Quatermass reacts as we cut to Dome showing figure at top.  
Cut to Bradhead staggering down steps, screaming.  
Cut to close-up Bradhead staggering, screaming, covered in slime.  
Cut to long-shot Bradhead staggering, screaming, covered in slime.  
He reaches bottom of steps, stands swaying.  
Lurches away.  
Screams at Quatermass: "Don't touch me!"  
Falls to ground.  
Quatermass ends: "What happened?"  
Bradhead ends: "I had to find out. This is the food and it burns."  
Bradhead gives gasp and dies.

I think, at that moment, I gave gasp and died a little too—only to be revived some fourteen secs. later by the fulgurous prose-poem which opens (on a sequent page) with Paddy's unforgettable yell: "The Things!"

Things collapsing, explosions, everything flaming.  
A roaring wind whips up.  
Boys leap out of jeep.  
Things burning, wind roaring.  
Quatermass and boys hug ground.  
Trees bending, wind howling.  
Things bubbling and towering.  
Boys hug ground.  
Jeep begins to topple.  
Jeep topples, zombie slumps.  
Trees bending.  
Boys hug ground.  
Wind eases.  
Wind stops.

Mine didn't stop all night.

After this, my friend started work on a Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano, and had reached the middle of the Slow Movement (*tranquillo e molto cantabile*) when they rang him up and asked him to do background music for *The Curse of Frankenstein*.

Cut to Victor examining brains through magnifying glass.  
Victor drops glass extracted from brains into dish.  
Close-shot of Paul dubiously watching.  
Cut to Victor as he puts down the knife.  
He wipes his bloody hand on his jacket.  
He picks up the severed head.  
Victor starts walk to acid tank carrying head.  
Victor places head on side of acid tank and starts to wrap same.  
Head clear of wrapping, and can be seen.



"And can be seen..." Do you understand now why my presence at the picture's première will be no more than a matter of professional punctilio? Is my imagination so stunted that I need actually *watch* what has been so potently described?

Justine starts to open the door. She pauses, looking furtively around. She starts to walk forward into the room.

She looks amusedly at a guinea pig in a cage. Shadow of Creature's hand is seen groping towards her. Justine reacts to slight noise off. Justine turns as we cut to medium close-shot of Creature. She starts to run for the door. Door is slammed from outside in her face. Cut to Victor's hands locking her in. Quick pan-up reveals Victor.

Cut to Justine, inside, as she turns to face the Creature. Creature's shadow starts to close over Justine as we start to track-in to full close-up of the now terrified Justine. She screams.

On second thoughts, perhaps it will be important for me to attend the première after all—if only to make sure whether that last word is a misprint or (appalling thought!) not.

## Another Device

By PATRICK SKENE CATLING

"TO me, I'm bound to confess," the Prime Minister of that unconsidered island said to his Cabinet, as they lolled together on the beach and contemplated small Pacific breakers softly rushing in towards the high-tide mark, "this thing looks like nothing more than a coconut."

"An atom isn't much to look at either, my dear Prime Minister," the Minister of Peace and Quiet gently retorted. "I assure you" (he made a courteous gesture acknowledging the circle of

brown old men in bikinis, sitting cross-legged, murmuringly gambling for sharks' teeth) "—our experts assure us—that this is much, much bigger."

"I don't quite see..." said the Prime Minister.

"Molecular structure is only part of it," suggested the Minister of Crafts. "The academic approach can be overdone. There are other factors: sunshine, for example; fermentation..."

"There are lots more where that came from," added the Minister of

Natural Resources. "A stockpile, to coin a word."

"You are saying then, in effect, that we occupy what one might call a position of strength," the Prime Minister said, clenching his toes with controlled excitement. "Let us negotiate from it. And, by all the fish in the sea around us! let us waste no time."

\* \* \* \* \*  
The newly appointed Minister of Off-Island Affairs arrived shivering at London Airport (England) several weeks



later, on a grey, gusty spring afternoon. The first few thousand miles of his journey had been pleasant enough, in an outrigger canoe; but the crowded cabins, the unnatural manoeuvres, and the irregular meals in the succession of airliners that had carried him the rest of the way had exhausted him. Even so, he tried for a time to answer some of the questions that were asked by a group of men whose drab raincoats and shapeless hats seemed to explain their interest in his own batik toga, plumage headdress, copra sandals and large embroidered straw handbag.

"Are you from part of the Empire?" asked the *Daily Express*.

"Have you suffered outrageous discrimination?" asked the *Observer*.

"Do you favour polygamy?" asked the *News of the World*.

"What film are you advertising?" the *Daily Mirror* wanted to know.

"I have come to conclude the tests of bombs," the Minister replied, "and, if possible, to procure for our esteemed Prime Minister some nice Western sweetmeats."

"First," said the man at the Foreign Office, in a voice of measured finality, as, with elbows on mahogany, he carefully brought fingertips against finger-

tips, "I must stress that our colleagues in the United Nations would be most upset—they might even take exception; they might utter notes of protest—if we were to recognize any sort of restraint of the kind you propose.

"After all," said the man at the Foreign Office, thoughtfully pursing and unpursing and pursing again his neat lips as he regarded without malice the clock on the wall, "the United Nations Disarmament Subcommittee at this very moment are discussing the unfeasibility of the non-testing of nuclear devices even by members. You can't really expect them to consider the non-testing of devices by a non-member, with or without mutual inspection, who hasn't as yet even demonstrated possession of a genuinely devastating device. You can't expect to gain credit for disarming, you can't expect others to reciprocate, if you haven't been recognized as a Power, can you? You have to run before you can learn to walk, you know.

"Secondly," said the man at the Foreign Office, his bank-managerial condescension overcoming his scout-masterly patience, "though we are, of course, inclined to pay sympathetic attention to the aspirations of almost all backward, underdeveloped peoples,

almost wherever they may be, H.M.G. do not recognize the régime of which, you say, you are a representative; indeed, according to the map at the back of my diary, the island from which you say you have come does not appear to exist. The negative aspects of your petition cannot, I'm afraid, be disregarded.

"Furthermore," said the man at the Foreign Office, rising conclusively to his feet and smiling so far in excess of the minimal demands of protocol that his teeth were displayed like classic ruins in an archaeological excavation, "there is the matter of the time. I'm so sorry, but it is time, actually, for my lunch."

The policeman guarding the sooty pillars of Lancaster House was adamant: there could be absolutely no admittance while the Disarmament Subcommittee was in session.

"You're the Minister of Off-Island Affairs, are you?" the policeman said. "You want to speak to the Subcommittee, do you? You've got a bomb you want to show them, have you? Oh, it's in that basket, is it? That's nice, isn't it? Now why don't you just oblige and move along, eh?"

At the United States Embassy, in Grosvenor Square, he asked to see the chief American delegate on the Subcommittee. Instead of Mr. Stassen, a young-middle-aged man received him.

"Gosh, I'm sorry," he said, "truly, I wish I could help you out. But the meetings are closed. I wish I could help, but gosh . . ."

At the Soviet Embassy, in Kensington Palace Gardens, a guard in a pale beige suit peered around the door and said "Mr. Zorin not here. Go away, please."

The next morning some newspapers published summaries of the Subcommittee's secret debate. They conjured up a vision of tired men doggedly marking time while being conveyed on an escalator backwards and downwards into a dark pit.

The Minister was discouraged. The stone pavements had hurt his feet. It had rained all morning. He was catching cold. While he ate a bun and drank tea in a café and watched people hurrying by he thought of the blue Pacific Ocean



and the beach and the shady, flowery groves and the women and children there. He made his decision.

\* \* \* \* \*

At a post office counter he wrote, in quintuplicate, his message to the Big Five. He said he had tried to talk to their disarmament experts personally; he hoped a meeting could still be arranged; he was sure they all had much in common, really. They could get in touch with him during the next few days in care of his landlady. Meanwhile, he supposed he must go ahead with arrangements for a Test. His government had been disinclined to hold a Test at all. His government had decided that if it had to hold a Test anywhere it had better be a long way away: one could never be quite sure about the results, could one? He was sure that

this decision would be understood by other governments. If they preferred not to negotiate they should, he suggested, move their populations, just until the Test and its dangers were past. He suggested that the evacuation area should extend from Des Moines, Iowa, eastwards to Omsk, U.S.S.R.—ideally, a bit farther: one couldn't be too careful, could one? The Test would be held in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, in not less than two weeks.

He shopped carefully. He bought a big box of chocolates and an eight-day alarm clock.

"I've already told you it's one hundred per cent guaranteed," the salesman reassured him. "You can bring it back if it doesn't give satisfaction."

The Minister went to get his tickets.

In the Azores he stayed long enough to buy a fishing boat, fitted specially with auxiliary fuel tanks. He himself took it out on a cloudy night. Far offshore, on a northwesterly heading, he lashed the wheel and checked the setting of the alarm clock and its attachments, and took to the dinghy. He had more than twenty-four hours in which to paddle back to catch his plane home.

\* \* \* \* \*

"In a way," said the Prime Minister, passing round the box while his Cabinet made their selections from the last layer, "I'm glad you didn't bring back a lot more of them. As things are, it would have been unfortunate to acquire any Western tastes."

But the Minister of Off-Island Affairs (retired) was dreamily examining a reformed map of the world.



# Shake Your Partners

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

ACCORDING to the latest social intelligence the Misses Susan Bridget Beryl Grantham, Alison Lansdown, Meriel Georgina Taylor, Caroline Mary Toosey, Hilary Watson and Anne Adele Whitbread are engaged. This makes them little more than tangential to these notes, which deal with other well-born girls who aren't but who expect to change all that before the *Times* "Diary of the Season" has run gaily through to the last débutante dance (Mrs. Wilfrid Rougier Chapman, for her daughter Zerelda, July 27, as it happens).

Apart from a dusting of lesser occasions—the Welsh Sheepdog Championships, the Rifle Brigade Ladies' Guild Tea Party—the Diary is almost all débutante dances, and as the eye clambers down the sparkling columns of English girlhood the ear catches the

crack of straining shirt-fronts, the frou-frou in conservatories, the muffled swirlings of the distant waltz.

Objections that glacial conservatory flirtings have now yielded to night-long bonhomie on houseboats, that to-day's shirts are soft, that the waltz has had it, are beside the point. The broad principles remain. Deb dances are deb dances, whether to string bands or maraccas, and still supply Society's only polite launching-ramp into wedlock. When Lady Cecil Douglas and Mrs. Rawlings, dead on their feet but bravely smiling, welcome their guests to Claridge's (May 23), their every thought will be on Miss Susan Douglas and Miss Patricia Rawlings, and their every other thought on the gay, winning and penniless young bachelors whose wiles their innocent chicks may find irresistible. Wistfully their maternal

hearts will dwell on the happy mothers of the Misses Grantham, Lansdown, Taylor, Toosey, Watson and Whitbread who, as mentioned above, have safely negotiated these early hazards and seen their betrothals ratified (as it were) on the back page of *The Tatler*; their thoughts may leap ahead even farther, to dreams of bliss hardly bearable, when their own daughters will be—*mutatis mutandis*—in the shoes of the Hon. Pamela Rose Weeks, walking down the aisle beside those of Lieutenant Plunkett-Erle-Drax, R.N., on the front page of *The Sketch*.

But can it ever be? Mrs. Howard Aykroyd and Denisa Lady Newborough ask themselves (as do Lady Jane Nelson Mrs. Christopher Kevill-Davies and a legion more) if their petal-faced children who only yesterday, it seems, were being button-hooked into their first tiny jodhpurs, can yet have forged any armour against the handsome deceivers even now eyeing them acquisitively over their gherkins-on-sticks? Your Penelopes and Grizeldas, Jennifers and Loretta Annes may have a sure hand with horses, but can they ride men on the snaffle?

Many a mother's heart—including those of the Hon. Mrs. Michael de Courcy, Mrs. Robert Crompton Hutton and other fellow-sufferers—may find ease in recent back numbers of the *Sunday Pictorial*. There is no Diary of the Season. But the correspondence sparked by Janet, Liverpool, is a considerably sounder investment.

"Some of the girls in the powder room at the Palais," wrote Janet, "were discussing the best way to rebuff boys who annoyed them. All agreed that 'Drop dead!' was not quite ladylike, but these were some other suggestions . . ."

And invaluable suggestions they were, supplemented in later weeks by Palais-frequenting *Pictorial* readers everywhere. Even the freshest young Hon. could hardly miss the hint behind "Drop an egg in your shoe and beat it!" (used with good effect by four young Northumberland readers), or the pithy "Wind your neck in!" (from a sister-Liverpudlian of Janet's). Neatly typed by Mother's secretary and slipped accessibly down the corsage of that gorgeous tulle, such *aides-mémoire*



"When I said it didn't make H-bombs they just lost interest."

would be unequalled as boulder-repellents, from Miss Elizabeth Bennet fighting off the Rev. Mr. Collins to (say) Miss Ruth Tennyson-d'Eyncourt, beset on a soft-lit landing by some little runt of a Marquis. "Really, Stuffy," protests Miss Tennyson-d'Eyncourt—or, it may equally well be Miss Billinda Pharazyn (Claridge's again, June 21)—"now you're being too silly." Quite useless. But try, with icy disdain, "Tell your mother not to come for the laundry next week" and a man's ardour cools at once; in a moment he has slunk away to throw champagne-bottles, or blunder about among the dance-band drums.

No one can doubt that the young marrieds are serenely happy in their newly married state; indeed it would be caddish, not to say actionable, to suggest the contrary. But supposing, purely for the sake of argument, that at some old, forgotten deb dance the attentions of the suitor had instead proved unwelcome. Could he for a moment have withstood the broadside advocated by Miss C., of Glasgow: "If I need you

I'll rattle your cage"? No. With equipment of this kind every débutante of the 1957 Season could pack her own push-button defence. The old-fashioned hat-pin isn't in it. The way may be eased at last for many a Mayfair mother, many a tremulous maiden who, but for the wisdom of Janet, Liverpool, would know no way to say No but "No."

Others to benefit might well include the discomforted suitors themselves, in the long run. And, naturally, the *Evening Standard* Night Reporting Corps, who may live to record, instead of that stale old "It took us twenty minutes from Hyde Park Corner," the clear sweet voice of some patrician

child stirring the echoes of her ancestral home with, "You're on the wrong planet, Superman!" or "Go home, your father wants your boots!"



## Coffee-House Rock

"Never be contemptuous about coffee-bar society."—Daily Mirror advice to mothers

MY Momma saw me dressed in my sharkskin jeans,  
And she told me, Honey, I know what this means.  
You ain't going to night-school, nor going out to dine,  
Nor going to see *The Curse of Frankenstein*.  
I guess you're going—why yes, you are!  
To mix with the riffraff in the coffee-bar.

But I turned to my Momma and I gave her a kiss,  
And I said to her, Momma,  
Just get this—

Don't knock the coffee-bars, Momma,  
No,

Don't knock the coffee-bars, Momma!  
They give the modern generation the same old lift  
That they once gave squares like Addison and Swift.  
We're just as intellectual as they were;  
We've heard of simply heaps of famous men;  
And a boy can't be a spiv  
Who can positively give  
The catalogue numbers of the whole Top Ten!  
So don't knock the coffee-bars, Momma,  
'Cause that's right where I belong.  
We really have a beano on a cup of Cappuccino  
And a jukebox jubilee of sentimental song,  
So don't knock the coffee-bars, Momma—  
You've just got the coffee-bars wrong.

My Momma done listened as a nice Momma should  
And she said, I still don't figure they do you any good.  
But I'll leave my tatting, and I'll leave my telly,  
And I'll leave my serial in *Mid-week Reveille*.  
And just to make sure how reliable you are  
I'll go down myself to the coffee-bar!

Well, I saw my Momma right the very next day  
And she said to me, Baby,  
It's this-a-way—

I won't knock the coffee-bars, Baby,  
No,

I *won't* knock the coffee-bars, Baby!  
I've discovered it's the same old basic squeal  
If you give it for Sir Richard or for Tommy Steele.  
Comparing Lonnie Donegan with Garrick,  
It's Lonnie makes my old heart ache;  
And believe me, Baby, I'm an  
Awful fan of Frankie Lyman—  
It's agonizing waiting for his wretched voice to break!  
So I won't knock the coffee-bars, Baby,  
'Cause this is what I aim to do—  
Going to buy a scarlet sweater and a second-hand Lambretta  
And hit that old Espresso till I'm coffee solid through,  
And I'll never knock the coffee-bars, Baby,  
For I guess I belong there too!

B. A. YOUNG



# Apropos des Maîtres

\*  
Q/B

«Mais, maman, ça fait la  
troisième qu'il m'a envoyée  
cette semaine»



«Henri, il paraît  
que les Lézanne  
sont en train de  
déménager»



«On mange mieux, paraît-il,  
chez M. Renoir.»



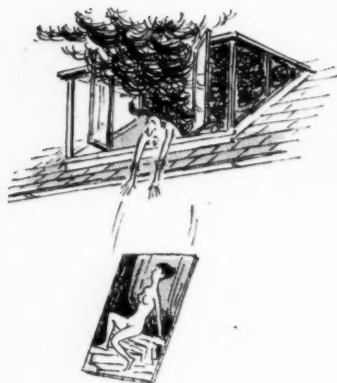
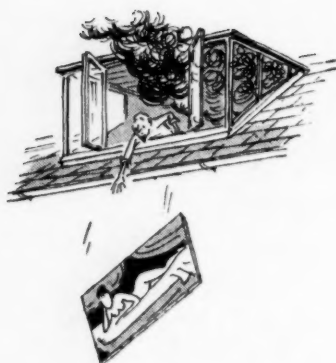
«Et pour peindre celle-ci, j'avais  
mis mes lunettes de soleil.»



«Il n'a rien d'affecté,  
mon style. C'est  
quelque chose que j'ai  
dans le  
sang.»



«Eh bien, comme tu veux — tu as vu  
un petit homme à barbe noire.»



## Memoirs of a Flat-Hunter

By G. W. STONIER

**I**T is the season. Rain spatters the window, and I look up; my hand steals to the wound that still from time to time troubles me; hat, macintosh, tape-measure wait in the hall.

Sweet and painful are the stirrings in an old hunter like myself. Ah, Hampstead and Hemerton, Campden Hill, Maida Vale, Earl's Court and Whitehall Court! Attic wit! Mews nights! Shall I ever forget the previous tenant in Holbein Place? Who could?

I don't know when I was first introduced to what has become a lifelong passion, but it must have been some time between the wars, when I was translating Jules Renard and camping out in Charlotte Street. That was before translators retired to Rowton Houses. Flats were common as dust-bins, you could pick your neighbourhood, view in the morning and move in the same afternoon. Not that the hunter of those days felt any urgent need of moving in. In streets beflagged with house-agents' boards there was always something better and cheaper over the hill.

The rain calls; but already as the newspaper van splashes round the

corner, it is too late. The early edition of the evening newspaper will have been snapped up, the Flats column rapidly scanned, telephone boxes filled, wires dispatched, taxis hailed, the hunt in full swing. On just such a morning, in the monsoon of Notting Hill, I viewed Heath's flat. The agent pointed to a wall where there had been blood-stains—"Well, people expected them, so we had to have the butcher in"—but now everything was quiet and draughty and unrelievedly dismal, with only the promise that where one famous career had started, there might another. I objected to the geyser, a quite peculiar one. "You don't know the chance you're missing," insisted the agent, and eyed me closely, as though under the macintosh there lurked possibilities I might not have discovered. "It's a snip," he added, showing broken teeth. Promising to come back, I went on to a terrace conversion by a formidable Scots lady, an Adam top floor with view of the Park—to be had by climbing on a chair.

Agents had been getting more and more crooked, till they were always

looking over their shoulders in case a rightful owner should have come back from the south of France. One tried to lease me a Knightsbridge flat in the dusk. The lights wouldn't come on, and as far as I could make out the flat consisted of one enormous landing; here by the stairs' rail the dining table would go, there was an alcove for a divan, by opening a window you could step on to a parapet going all round the building, etc. So original; and a wonderful address. But his head, in the twilight, seemed permanently skewed round, and he was trailing one hand as though to fend off kicks.

Then there were the porters of blocks of flats looking like ocean liners (and the flats themselves like third-class cabins); even to speak to them cost ten shillings, while information would mean a tenner, and a deal anything up to half a year's rent.

And of course there were the composers who set up that indispensable Flats column: this could be, at a price and in a shady bar, previewed.

1944-52—grand years, when flat-hunting acquired a dangerous brilliance





it has never known before or since. Then a typical day, starting before dawn, might include View of the Thames (coming in under a basement door), Five Minutes from Piccadilly (Muswell Hill), a landing craft (£5,000) off Chelsea and a riverside bungalow (chicken shed with allotment) in Essex, purchase of a ten years' lease in reddest-

bricked Kilburn from a lady without deeds, waiting list for a £1,000-a-year joint in Eaton Square, a pent-house with roof garden like a submarine deck in the fog over Shepherd's Bush; and then in the dusk would come a very genteel though puzzlingly angled mansions flat, three houses away from which lives Mr. Dennis Price.

One quarry was over a Tube station. I didn't realize this ("conveniently situated") till I got there. It took some time to find a narrow entrance which, however, opened into a stairs-well with a lift almost as large as the Tube one I had just quitted. Indeed for a moment I thought it was the same. And it was not only very large but very old, a skeleton cage in a skeleton shaft. I was wondering how to set about prising open two sets of gates when I noticed the one old rusty cable on which the lift hung. I decided to walk.

They were hollowed stone stairs, and to mark the ascent hundreds of people had cut initials in the wall. I paused at the fourth floor. There was a wheezing and grumbling noise from below that made me peer down: the old lift was following me. I ran the last two flights, pressed the bell urgently. The door opened. I slipped in.

Whether it was the afternoon sun or the smell of frying, the flaked paint and low ceilings, the slattern sisters who showed me round, pointing to the frayed lino and dirty curtains that would be left as fittings (£450), and remarking

that the three months' lease meant nothing, because I couldn't be turned out; whether, as I say, it was this desolate pressure within, or the thought of that Lift now audibly swaying and knocking without, I don't know; I dreaded staying, I couldn't go; but go, in the end, I did.

The Lift was waiting. It began to open its doors. I ran.

It followed. It was gaining; and then on one landing, just as I was stumbling past, it halted and snapped.

I gave a cry, leapt, fell, broke my ankle, but lay clear of those terrible doors...

We shan't know such days again. Flat-hunting is not what it was, and the lazy and unworthy, some with high-powered cars, degrade a fine sport. So it is in many fields.

But for the hunter disappointed with flats there is always the alternative—chase a cottage.

## Subdued Baritone Solo

"The famous Macmillan plateau is lost."  
The Times

**H** EIGH-HO! Many a month ago We held the norm together you and I, my old plateau, Now our steppe is slipping down the slope the brink begins to show— Ten, twenty, thirty, forty hundred feet below.

F. L. M.

## For Whom the Bell Tolls

**N**OW that shop stewards are fulfilling an increasingly important role in industrial relations it comes as no surprise to learn that their latest goal is professional status. It is proposed to hold annual examinations and to present each successful candidate with a certificate. Below is a specimen examination paper. There will obviously be no ordinary level.

### ADVANCED SHOP STEWARDSHIP

(Four questions, and FOUR only must be answered. However, in accordance with sound Trade Union practice, candidates will be credited with marks as if they had completed FIVE answers.)

1. Give the titles of four books suitable for the fireman of a diesel locomotive to read on *either* a main line service *or* a branch line.

2. A workman in your department has been sent to Coventry. Inadvertently, a crane driver allows a girder to fall on the man's foot. Without any hesitation the crane driver says "Sorry, chum!" How would you deal with this breach of discipline and unwarranted display of comradeship?

3. Given the following outline, write a story of no more than 100 words.

"Wage demand — Rejection — Dejection — Strike threat — Strike — Jubilation — Negotiation — Arbitration — Award — Emigration."

4. Without in any way violating the term "peaceful picketing," explain how you would:

- (a) Render a lorry useless.
- (b) Divert apprentices.
- (c) Take away films from press cameramen.
- (d) Jostle policemen.

5. "Why make things easy when you can make them difficult?" In the light of this quotation, state your attitude towards automation.

(N.B. At the end of the examination a bell will ring. Candidates are requested not to run from the examination room.)

H. HALLWORTH

# Cockburn's Aspects of English History

## Lisping Numbers



THE question has been asked whether it is possible to over-emphasize the role of the poet, the painter and the musician in the unfolding of English history and character.

Have, in the past, historians devoted too scant attention to the solicitor, the brigadier, the bricklayer and the district nurse?

The late Earl Baldwin, himself a student of history, is reported to have remarked in his blunt fashion to the (later) Earl Attlee—then but winning his spurs in the rough, yet essentially kindly, tumble of English political life—"Clem, you know you can't have common labour without common labourers." To which, in a response already historic, the predestined leader of the Labour Party rejoined "But Stanley, never forget, as some of your friends on your side of the House are sometimes a little bit inclined to do, that the labourer is worthy of his hire." "Aha," riposted the Conservative leader with his disarming chuckle, "I see the devil can still quote scripture to his purpose," and was thought to have had a shade the better of the verbal joust.

Those who affect to see in the present



day "cult" of the moving picture actor (or the player of the "ragtime" music so popular among the youth of our time) some new and possibly degenerate, or, at the best, debilitating influence, have (possibly through some lack of training in the true historical approach) surely failed to note that, whereas in the earlier Elizabethan Age two Earls and a

Englishman who first said "Freedom is the recognition of necessity," and it is not untypical of the Slav outlook that Lenin—after an all-too-cursory examination of the works available at the British Museum—should have issued this phrase as his own.

Progress there was, but it was slow, and—as has been seen in the fullness of



rival dramatist not only shared the general idolization of Shakespeare but went to the length of "planting" (if one may employ some useful Americanism) evidence to convince subsequent generations that they actually *were* Shakespeare and had written all but the more vapid and ill-constructed of his works, there are but few Peers at the present moment claiming actually to be Elvis Presley, Satchmo Armstrong, or Arthur Miller.

It is a measure of the progress that has been made by an England which, as has truly been said "Started rather small, become somewhat bigger, and then got somewhat smaller again." Sainte-Beuve in the 1850s found it necessary to remind the volatile French that "It is hard to learn that one no longer has to govern the world." In England a similar reminder would be otiose. It was almost certainly an

the ultimate event—desirably so. Often enough in the history of the European community, as it must (except in case of destructive war between its component members) be termed, while the excitable Latin has cried "*Festina*," it is the deep steady bass of the Englishman which has appended the indispensable corrective "*lente*."

In other words English literature was not built in a day. Many were the obstacles which its fathers had to overcome. At the outset, for example, even the language was almost useless for the purpose, as Chaucer found to his cost. (It is much to the credit of the English that, though the greater part of what he wrote is unintelligible to the normal man or woman, he has been given the benefit of the doubt and been dubbed a "poet." One likes to think that after his many difficulties he would have been pleased to hear that this was so.



"Considering," he is reported to have said on his deathbed, "that the language was in a state of flux, with all spellings uncertaine, I did my best. I can think of no finer epitaff for an Englishman.")

Next came the bear. Shakespeare's producer, it will be recalled, had one, and wanted W.S. to exploit the creature. The stage direction "Exit pursued by a bear" was not enough to justify the expense account. *Hamlet* followed, and the glaring structural faults of the play are to be, for the most part, attributed to the difficulty experienced by the dramatist in keeping the bear permanently on stage. Even so, the first night saw unprecedented scenes.

Brawling followed almost immediately and became a major hazard for English poets. Christopher Marlowe was a case in point. Authorities have argued interminably as to whether he passed away in a tavern brawl, a brawl in a bawdy house, a brawl in a street, or in some undefined brawl occurring after breakfast. But no one doubted that the thing was a brawl. It is a measure of what the poets of that period had to face.

And whatever may be the final judgment of history on such poets as Shakespeare and Eliot, it is much to their credit that the former did not die in a brawl, and there is no evidence leading to anyone supposing that the latter will do so either, despite the circumstance of having been, at one time, an associate of Ezra Pound who, great poet though he be, had at a certain period a tendency towards the brawl. But he is, after all, an American, and thus outside the scope of our present study. English poets soon saw that brawling was not the road forward.

And with the idea once grasped they eschewed brawling.

At the outset of what may be termed—for want of a better phrase—English Literature, there already existed a profound and regrettable misunderstanding between the writing people and the state. Under the first Elizabeth the Organization for General Popular Uplift (popularly abbreviated to OGPU), which was later transformed into the National Knowledge Verification Department (NKVD, as it came to be known in popular parlance), both took a mistaken attitude to writing men. For some extraordinary reason it was taken for granted by these authorities that men like "Ben" Jonson, the first poet laureate, Bill Davenant and actually Dryden, needed, or at least wanted, drink more than almost anything else.

It was not until Alfred Lord Tennyson put a stop to the disgraceful practice by commuting the "butt of sack," which had previously been paid to laureates, into a cool cash payment of £27 (it is now known that it was in order to show the cheque—something of a windfall—that he asked Maud into the garden, thus enriching Literature) that the notion of buying genius with alcoholic liquor finally ceased.

Nor were the tribulations of our British poets, essayists, novelists, short-story writers and scripters yet at an end.

During the early 19th century the rent of garrets and attics rose steeply, and many a promising poet who, circa 1825, had settled down to starve in his garret or attic, found, before he could complete his snatch of genius, a wolf not merely at but within the door.

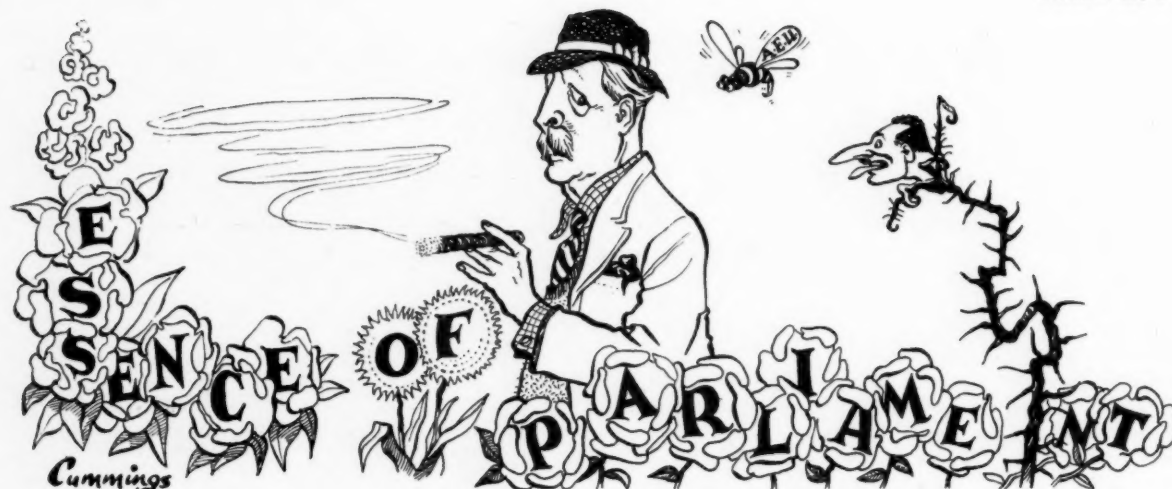
Browning took steps, and close on his

heels W. Auden took some more. The latter's "Wolves in attics, Recommended Treatment of" (Oxford University Press) is a little gem of its kind and provides more knowledge of English Literature than can be obtained from any similar book of like title.

It is a tribute to the English genius to be able to note that to-day no such difficulties confront the aspirant Englishman (or, one need hardly say, woman) who seeks to storm the heights of Abraham with an Elegy on the Playing Fields of Eton. In England the splendid men of the Cultural Inspiration Duty, and in the United States the Federation of the Brotherly Inspired, have seen to it that, as Earl Baldwin once said, "the man who keeps reasonably close to line now has a reasonably good chance of being close to the breadline when it comes."







THE House reassembled and Mr. Graeme Finlay wanted to know why so untidy an animal as the red squirrel was chosen by the Minister of Housing as a symbol of the anti-litter campaign. The answer appeared to be that the squirrel was "photogenic." One has heard of Cabinet Ministers, let alone squirrels, who were appointed for reasons not so very different from that. Was it for that very reason that Honourable Members wanted Mr. Macmillan to go to Moscow? But Mr. Paget asked in his customarily measured terms, "Does not all historical experience lead us to believe that the leaders of states are better kept apart?" What a strange place the House of Commons is! This was one of the few obviously sensible, true and important things that had been said in it for some time. Yet the House roared its head off.

Besides laughing, there was a good deal of nodding in this reassembled House. Cecil Chesterton once said that the party system could only work when both parties were the same. There is a degree of truth in that. The Opposition can have a pleasant view-halloo about some alleged personal blob of a Minister, but the major policies must have continuity if they are to succeed. So from the national point of view it was encouraging, as Mr. Maudling expounded his plans of future power policy, to see first Mr. Shinwell start solemnly to nod in the third row back, then behind him Mr. Darling take up the nodding, and Mr. Hobson in front of him. Soon we had rows upon rows of mute, inglorious Homers on the Socialist benches, all nodding away like

anything. It was encouraging, but—let us face it—it was funny, far funnier than Mr. Paget, and Mr. Robens in this main issue was left with nothing much to say but to thank God that since the welfare—that is to say, the standard of living—of the people was at stake this was not a party question.

What, one wondered, is there left so unimportant, mattering so little, that we can safely leave it to be a party question—that is to say, something upon which the electorate can express an opinion? On the passing point of petrol rationing Mr. Robens had the better of it, and the kindest critic could hardly acquit Mr. Renton's reply of complacency.

Yet if everybody else was out of step, Mr. Nabarro, it need hardly be said, was ready enough to play our Johnny. There is something delightfully engaging in the proprietorial air with which Mr. Nabarro assumes the role of Jehovah to preside over all debates about power. He hovers above them like a Deity, for his is the Fuel, the Power and the Glory. He interrupts in high indignation at the suggestion that any share of the credit for the White Paper should be given to anybody but himself. He interrupts his colleagues' speeches to correct points of fact. He leans forward to give Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd a friendly pat, like a triumphant bowler who congratulates the defeated batsman who has done his best but not very well. He intervenes to remind the world that what Kidderminster does to-day England had better do to-morrow, or he will know the reason why. But one swallow cannot make a summer and

one Nabarro cannot make a Parliamentary system. Mr. Maudling certainly did his best by speaking from a bare and noteless dispatch-box, eschewing the all too common ministerial habit of reading, but it was not a lively day. Mr. John Harvey of Walthamstow made an interesting speech, trying vainly to brighten things up by dragging in Suez—so interesting that it was bad luck that the tape should have attributed it to Mr. Ian Harvey of Harrow.

The week's best joke came on Wednesday from Mr. Profumo in reply to Miss Jennie Lee's complaint that she had received information of racial discrimination in the Demerara Bauxite Company. He reminded her that she had recently had occasion to know that all information that reached her was not necessarily accurate—and there sitting beside her was the prodigal husband, who, even if he did not get a helping of fatted calf, at least asked a supplementary.

As the House troops back there really does look for the first time to be a reasonable chance of the Socialists beating themselves in the next election by the sheer incompetence of their leadership. Or is it merely that Mr. Bevan took the plane to Paris when he ought to have taken that to London? And now that he is back will all be different? We shall see. Meanwhile, how much Mr. Macmillan does enjoy being Prime Minister—so much that in this sad world where so few people enjoy anything we are inclined to say "Goodness me, if the boy likes the job as much as all that, why shouldn't he keep it?"

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



# Britain's Perfect Housewife

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

THE title of Britain's Perfect Housewife was last week bestowed upon Mrs. Hebblethwaite from the village of Chilbolton in the county of Hampshire. This plump and pleasing manifestation of the dream-spouse received a cheque for a thousand pounds from a firm of milk food manufacturers, together with a solid silver statuette which appeared to be a symbolic figure of fertility.

Figure of fertility or figure of fun, the British housewife needs resting. This is not because she is overworked in the home: quoted statistics show that in one year she peels 7,280 potatoes, stands at the sink night and day for the equivalent of a month, walks over five hundred miles around the house; but they do not show all the little self comfortings and cossetings that go on throughout the day. Where she is overworked is as a subject for articles, speeches, and radio programmes. On television panels she gives pointless answers to pertinent questions, and squirmish giggles to impertinent ones. She is always ready with second-hand opinions on political problems, and is wooed by statesmen, salesmen, and advertisers. She holds the country's purse strings, rocks the nation's cradle, and is the world's greatest bore—altogether too much of a too good thing. But the Perfect Housewife may mark the turning point. *What's come to perfection perishes*; and the housewife, having reached her peak of perfection, may from now on decline. Let us look forward with confidence to the day when Britain will no longer be sneered at as a nation of housewives.

The pursuit of perfection has been long and arduous. It started with a questionnaire incorporated in a milk food advertisement. To each question were printed three answers, one of which was correct. The competitor simply had to put a cross against her guess. Thus it was not even necessary for her to be able to write. Out of seventy-three thousand entrants, forty-one semi-finalists were selected, all of whom happily proved to be literate. These were brought to London "to fight it out for the area awards." The choice of weapons for this round is not revealed; we only know that after the

engagement there were eight survivors left in the field. These eight were visited in their own homes "to assess their social and financial backgrounds." Not one of them refused this indignity, which shows to what depths the housewife has been degraded.

For the final round, the eight were again brought for a night in a London hotel. Next morning they were whisked without warning to Harrods and told to spend £50 at the rate of ten shillings a minute. Their purchases were taken,

as they bought them, to a committee room for assessment by four judges. After this shopping spree, or spurt, they were refuelled with luncheon and then conveyed to the afternoon emptiness of a Piccadilly banqueting room. Here, before a soured audience of failed contestants, they faced further questions from the judges and a battery of microphones and cameras.

Judgment was given after an interval for the cup which could scarcely, with a thousand pounds at stake, do much to



"How you making out with the Doctrine, Mac?"

cheer. No husbands were present to share the moment of tension; they were all at home looking after the children. Children are, of course, necessary appurtenances of perfect and near-perfect wives; and indeed, the second-prize winner could boast, and did, of two sons aged forty and thirty years, and a daughter of thirty-seven. This lady is now the better off by £250, two spring mattresses, two pairs of sheets, two blankets, twelve yards of curtain net, and a cigar. Household linen was the first choice of all competitors. They may have felt, and rightly, that this would show optimum housewifeliness: she who lays out a windfall on household linen is an obvious Martha, accredited with all the domestic virtues; whereas she who spends it on the fashion floor is regarded as a paragon of all the vices.

Whatever they bought, it is certain that when these imperfect housewives, the runners-up, reached home with their trophies their choice will have been

criticized; and even more certain is it that each will have told her husband that he would have chosen, in the surprise circumstances, far worse. The situation recalls that little vignette of married life, the fairy tale of the man and his wife suddenly offered three wishes. "Oh," cried the husband, looking at his supper of soup and dry bread, "I wish for a sausage!" and immediately a sausage appeared on his plate. "You fool!" screamed his wife, "fancy wasting a wish on a sausage . . . I wish it may stick to your stupid nose!" And the sausage leapt up and stuck to his nose. Then

they had to spend their third wish to get it off.

A neat précis of married life, starting as it does with a husband's implied criticism of his wife's catering, continuing with a shrewing, and concluding with their joint resources having to be thrown in to retrieve a disastrous situation brought about by their own foolishness. Thus is it ever in the average cottage and castle; whether it is any different in the home of the Perfect Housewife only Mr. Hebblethwaite of the village of Chilbolton in the county of Hampshire can say.

### Meiosissimus

*Stanley Inngs, an old-age pensioner, has won £75,000 from the football pools. He said "Things are going to be much easier now."*

O LEXICOGRAPHERS, receive the story,  
And let the name in diamonds be set!  
Not for his gold give Mr. Inngs the glory,  
But for the grandest understatement yet.

A. P. H.



"What does a pound note look like to you?"



### Profits Seesaw

THE recent spate of company reports confirms the sober estimates of the Economic Survey: profits have lost their momentum and are almost at a standstill. During the first quarter of 1957 companies reporting revealed increased trading profits of about one per cent, which is less than a proportionate share of the new inflationary carbonic gas pumped into the national cake. The figures do no more than remind the investor that the boom of yesteryear, strangled by the credit squeeze and coshed by the Suez affair, turned up its toes some time ago.

No very clear pattern emerges from the assembled returns. Some consumer goods industries are obviously still in the money. The profits of shops and stores rose last year by about four per cent, of breweries, distilleries and food companies by ten per cent, but these gains were offset by significant profit reductions in many consumer durables industries, in electrical and furnishing businesses. Steel profits just about held their ground, but motors lost fifteen per cent of their profit and general manufacturing about eight per cent.

And this trend is continued in the figures trotted out last week by another representative bunch of big companies: Imperial Chemicals' net profit *down* by £2 million, Cammell Laird's by £14,000, John Dickinson's by £200,000, Associated Portland Cement's by £300,000; British Petroleum's net profit *up* by nearly £8 m., United Drapery's by £150,000, United Molasses' by £400,000, Royal Mail's by £100,000, Spillers' by £110,000.

In the circumstances it is inevitable that equity prices should take a breather. The Industrial Index has climbed steadily for some five months and this in spite of the fact that some blue-chip dividend yields are now only fractionally higher than the return on Consols. It is obvious that investment is still conditioned very largely by fear of renewed inflation. Profit margins may be lower and declared dividends will

almost certainly absorb less of total profits, but the investor—more concerned than ever to find growth stocks (industrials which cannot go on increasing their potential without someday bursting at the seams)—is prepared to play a waiting game.

Rugby Portland Cement, mixed by the capable hands of Halford Reddish, goes from strength to strength. The profits of the group rise steadily, but dividend policy is conservative. There is clearly plenty of work for the cement industry for many years, and the Rugby enterprise opens new markets overseas with remarkable regularity. I regard the shares of this company as one of the safest and most promising lock-up investments in the market.

Nineteen-fifty-six was a horrible year for soft drinks and Schweppervescence couldn't quite stay the course as successfully as in 1955. Even so, the trading figures are highly satisfactory.



### Good Luck with the Pools

THERE is nothing I know quite so irritating as making a generous gesture which turns out to be generous in fact. For the last few years I've been in the habit of letting anyone fish my little stream here. I've given my permission casually if not even graciously. I could afford to: I knew there weren't a dozen trout left in half a mile. I've been too lazy to shoot the herons and get rid of the otters, and too poor to pay a water bailiff. Besides which the stream has never been stocked. It's given me much malicious amusement watching my friends go off, wearing waders and loaded with paraphernalia, to return empty-handed at the end of their wasted day. Nevertheless I have, I suppose, given them some exercise.

That's what the form was until a small boy last week upset my calculations. He had asked permission and I had nodded my head and patted his with my usual generosity. And in gratitude his father was standing me a few drinks at the local. A couple of hours

During 1956 the group (which includes Schweppes, the selling subsidiary Kia-Ora, and the British concession of Pepsi-Cola of America) fizzed trading profits of £1,750,000. In less than ten years Sir Frederic Hooper, the original Schweppshire lad, has quadrupled sales on the home market and stepped up productivity per worker by more than 100 per cent.

Another excellent result—all things and Suez considered—is that of British Petroleum. But with net profits up from £45 m. to £53 m. investors are naturally disappointed with the standstill dividend of 15 per cent tax-free. The yield on B.P. is undoubtedly slender at the moment, and I can only suppose that share-out operations are suffering from the enervating winds blowing in from the Middle East. Investors, I have no doubt, will continue to believe that there are better times just around the corner. MAMMON

later I wandered down to the pool where the boy was fishing. To my horror I observed that the little brat had three fish, each at least two-pounders, on the bank beside him. I did my best to look pleased. The boy gave me a fish. Gratitude never came easily to me. I stomped up the hill and began to prepare my own rod and tackle.

At least it was some consolation to me the next evening to find that I caught as many fish as the boy. I tried two or three pools and found each well stocked. This put me in a fury at the thought of all the good sport I had just given away, and next in a state of bewilderment at the change in the state of the stream. I could not understand what could have caused it.

I wandered along the banks, noticing fish rising at every pool. I wondered if this could be due to some falling-off in the number of herons. Had all the pike got washed out to sea? Neither seemed very likely. It was a mystery.

So of course the next morning I asked the postman for an explanation. As he goes from farm to farm he's the most reliable oracle in the country and knows what's going on and what should not be going on. I told him of my well-stocked stream; the news didn't surprise him. He shook his head sadly. "I know, guv'nor," he said, "the young baint the same any more; they're too lazy even to go poaching. Why, my own son is so idle he can hardly hang together. The country's not what it was when I was a lad. That's why your stream's got fish in it."

RONALD DUNCAN





## BOOKING OFFICE

### "Awake, My Little Ones, and Fill the Cup"

**Wines and Spirits.** L. W. Marrison. Penguin, 5/-

THIS is an extraordinarily informative book. Mr. L. W. Marrison has not only crammed a startling amount of material into three hundred pages but he also writes in a readable—and sometimes exceedingly amusing—style, without any of the affectations that mar so many books about wine. He deals with its history, production and uses, with many hints valuable to the amateur.

People discussing wine are, more often than not, intent on impressing the listener with their own knowledge and experience, rather than anxious to learn, or even to teach. The fact is, of course, that without some sort of professional training it is impossible to do more than skim the outer surface of wine lore. At the same time, some hosts give you better wine than others, and it is certainly not entirely a matter of whether the former host has more money than the latter. In other words, knowledge and interest, however unprofessional—however silly and pretentious even—are better from the consumer's point of view than no knowledge or interest at all.

The vine from which the wine grapes are obtained grows wild in great profusion in the area between Samarkand and the Caucasus in Russian Turkestan. This seems to have been the original home of wine, which can be traced back to about eight or ten thousand B.C. The production and consumption of wine in different countries of the world at the present day is full of surprises. As Mr. Marrison tells, if all the other wine of the world ceased to exist, and the wine of France remained plentifully available, wine lovers could carry on. They might regret fine hock and delicate sherry, but infinite richness would remain. If, on the other hand, the wines of France were removed, the loss would be catastrophic.

In this country—where the drinking of wine continues to rise since the war—the peak year of French wine imports was 1876, when seven million gallons were imported. Since 1931 the two million gallon total has never been reached. You pay a tax of 2/6 on every bottle of wine you drink, and 24/7 on every bottle of spirits. One of the salient aspects of wine drinking is the extortionate profit (with a few—very few—honourable exceptions) restaurateurs

prevents any "great wines" being produced, even if the climate allowed.

However, enormous strides are being made in some of these countries—for example, with South African sherry, which (I have elsewhere heard it said) requires only better brandy in the blending to make it the equal of Spanish sherry. It is also rumoured (not in Mr. Marrison's book) that a process of artificially "ageing" champagne may very considerably reduce the expense of that wine—and, one hopes, in due course the retail price.

Mr. Marrison has a general word to say about every type of wine in the world. Russia, of course, where wine production is said to be increasing, remains largely problematic. Certainly when I was there ages ago the "bad bottle of Caucasian wine" of innumerable Russian novels still abundantly existed. In Mexico, rather peremptorily dismissed by Mr. Marrison, the table wine over the border from California seemed to me much better than that produced in America; but that was only a few years after the repeal of Prohibition (when many of the American vineyards had been put out of commission), so the contrast may now be less marked.

Of spirits there is, naturally, less to say; but we learn here why gin was so unpalatable between 1939 and 1953; and that a bottle of brandy costs only ten bob in South Africa. Whisky drinkers will also find the history of their *visge-beatha* to solace them. The book ends with maps of the wine-producing areas of the world.

ANTHONY POWELL

## Varieties of Desire

**Outbreak of Love.** Martin Boyd. John Murray, 12/6

The love is not so violent as one might judge from the title; and the epidemic which spreads during a Government House ball in Melbourne just before the 'fourteen war infects different people very differently. There is possessive love, first-awakening love, casual love, true mature love, and desire for the undesirable. All these infections of the



expect to make on wine. You can buy a very drinkable *vin ordinaire* for 6/6, but in how many restaurants can you obtain one even for 13/-, which is, after all, one hundred per cent profit?

The first attempts to cultivate the vine in North America were made as early as 1564. America is responsible both for the terrible scourge of the Phylloxera, which attacked the European vineyards in the nineteenth century—and is still a perpetual menace—and also for providing the remedy in replanting them with American grapes. Wine is produced far more largely in America than is generally supposed, but the standardization there (as in all the "young" wine producing countries)



affections are noted by a twenty-year-old boy on whom the author's mantle has fallen. There are many good things in the writing, which is a satisfying blend of irony, tenderness, humour and direct observation. "But culture—which is just learning about the real culture, about what someone else did so that you can be spiteful to your friends—that's just purgatory," and "... to see her ... gave me one of those shocks which ... we always remember, as they are an extension of our experience." Maybe the author's own brilliance breaks out too exuberantly in some of his younger characters, making them wittier than fact would allow; but that is carping criticism of a book that adds a first-rate story and an excellent portrait of pre-war days to all its other virtues.

B. E. B.

**The Day the Money Stopped.** Brendan Gill. *Gollancz*, 12/6

This short novel is very near to being a play. It is written almost entirely in dialogue, it has a single setting in a family law firm and the characters develop, interact and reveal the past in a way that should be pleasing to a reasonably quick-witted audience. This involves keeping the past outside the framework and letting it emerge slowly, through retrospect and confession. It also leaves too much of the building up of the main character, a black sheep of enormous charm, to the actor. What might be a strength in a play leaves the novel unconvincing, although continuously interesting. In cold print, Charles is a heel. When his prissy younger brother revolts against his exactions and tries to protect their adoring sister from him, he is more right than the author seems to believe. The gradual revelations about the respectable lawyer father are irrelevant to the reader's valuation of either of his sons. However, it is all brilliantly put over, van Druten if not Ibsen.

R. G. G. P.

**Battle for the Mind.** William Sargant. *Heinemann*, 25/-

An enlightening and terrifying book. Enlightening, because one has felt quite baffled by the way groups, communities, whole populations can be induced to accept and live by values that seem cruelly imbecile; terrifying, because the arguments and examples here must convince any reader that as nearly as possibly everybody—everybody, including himself—could and would be induced to think in the same (or any other) way.

What seems incredible to most people is the apparent sincerity of mass conversion, for instance to Communism or Nazism; one assumes hypocrisy, fear of the secret police. This book's value is that it shows, with a wealth of example including religious revivalists from Wesley to Billy Graham (the author is careful to insist that he is concerned not with the inherent truth or falsity of the beliefs but only with the mechanism, the physiology

of thought control), how the subject may be brought to the pitch of accepting with genuine joy beliefs that he has hitherto hated. The intellect—one has to admit it after reading this book—is absolutely irrelevant; emotion, powerfully and scientifically induced, is all.

R. M.

**309 East and A Night of Levitation.** Bianca VanOrden. *Hart-Davis*, 11/6

Her publisher falls into the blurb-trap when he claims that the world of Miss VanOrden is "completely fresh and unique in its strange values and even stranger events." But it would be just to say that she is an original writer, who can fit the unexpected dramatically into an apparently sane pattern, and turn oddities of character to witty and perceptive use. The first of her two stories, long and cut into chapters, describes the surprising experience of the right-hand-man to an exotic millionaire who imports carpets and regulates his life by the stars. The second deals gracefully with the brief adventure of a schoolgirl and a hungry and cynical beachcomber in a New England sailing village.

Miss VanOrden's writing is free from the nostalgic whimsy and analyst's jetsam which too often cloud modern American fiction. She is satisfied with a curious present, to which she brings vitality and a delicate choice of words.

E. O. D. K.

**Collected Poems.** John Pudney. *Putnam*, 18/-

The sons of Johnny Head-in-Air are growing up in a world that would have disquieted their father. For though no Rupert Brooke went to the Second War, and their father and his friends were disillusioned before the band began to play, such of them as returned from facing that music entertained ideals which, however cleanly hard, have proved as tarnishable as the romanticism of Brooke. It is with the reasons for that tarnishing that many of the later poems in John Pudney's first collected volume are broodingly preoccupied. Of war he sang with bitter, but timeless passionate hate:

"I had my songs from death, from how men feel  
Caught in the eye of history and born  
for the unchoosing bullet, how life, worn  
Easy as petals, suffered death's brief steel."

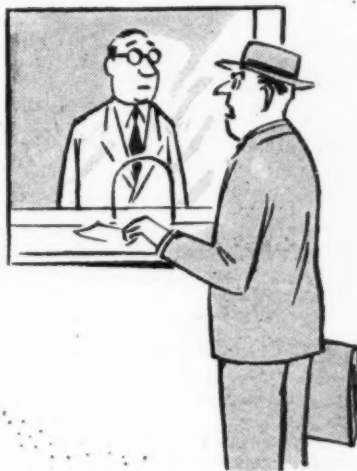
Of the contemporary aftermath he falters:

"I saw the fields that would never crop again,  
The haywains split for firewood and the tractor rusting.  
I saw the new masters swarming in gum boots in the rain  
Indifferently plotting the new era..."

But England will survive this, as other eras; and may well continue to read John Pudney, for the pulse of English poetry beats steadily in his verse.

R. C. S.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE



## Hollywood

"Do you happen to have any very old, dog-eared and thoroughly unpleasant Swiss francs—suitable for paying canal dues in?"

## AT THE PLAY

*The Glass Cage* (PICCADILLY)  
*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (NEW)

AFTER the fatigues of the past few weeks in attempting to decode the messages of Beckett, Tennessee Williams and Genet, the old-fashioned directness of J. B. Priestley's *The Glass Cage* is a relief. It is an Edwardian period-piece, set in Canada, and although about revenge, it is its futility which is the point. Into the prosperous Toronto home of their psalm-singing aunt and uncles come three young intruders, so politely venomous that trouble is clearly in store. Their exact intentions puzzle us too long; Mr. Priestley is much too leisurely in telling us that their drunken father had been cheated of his inheritance, that their half-breed mother's bitterness has poisoned them, and that they have arrived heavily armed with aces to recover their fortune.

One always finds a certain grim pleasure in watching the disruption of a smug façade of moral humbug. The McBane household in its awful respectability is rocked by whisky, tobacco and riotous dancing, and its younger members, brought up in blinkers, are treated by their unscrupulous cousins to a startling eye-opener. But just as Mr. Priestley has lulled us into thinking his play a straightforward job of demolition, he springs two interesting surprises. The self-righteous uncle suspected of

the trickery turns out not only innocent but heartily ashamed of his family, while the three conspirators, poised for the kill, realize suddenly that their only hope of happiness lies in renouncing the bitter fruits of vengeance. A glimmer of the truth, that their mother has imprisoned and nearly ruined them in her fanatical hatred of the rest of the family, is seen by one of the brothers in his cups, and the others seize it eagerly. This sudden emergence of decency through a hard crust of cynicism is very plausibly managed, without sentiment, and makes the play's final scenes its most effective. This is not vintage Priestley, but it marks a return towards his old standards.

He wrote it for the three able young Canadians, Barbara Chilcott, Murray Davis and Donald Davis, who form the attack, and the force of their acting fully justifies his interest. Their fellow-players from the Crest Theatre, Toronto, are not quite so good, but Frank Peddie is soundly unctuous as the head of the family.

This seems to be Empire Week in the theatre, and from Australia—its first dramatic export—comes *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, by Ray Lawler, with an all-Australian cast. Like so many plays

we have had lately from America, it subscribes to the cult of the inarticulate, dealing in the muscle-bound emotions of the very simple; but though it ends tragically it has an irony and a sense of enjoyment that set it apart from the run-of-the-mill drama of grunting and despairing truck-drivers. It is nearly a good play, for Mr. Lawler writes robust dialogue, and I think it would have been if he had made himself clearer and not at the end left us in doubt about his heroine's hysterical behaviour.

For sixteen blissful years she and a friend have been, for the five months of the lay-off season, the unofficial but faithful wives of two hard-working cane-cutters coming back to town to blow their wages. Each year brings another doll to swell the prized collection on the chimney-piece; in this, the seventeenth, the friend has married, and in her place Olive has introduced, disastrously, a reluctant barmaid. Everything goes wrong. Under Pearl's gloomy eye the party-spirit dies. The men fight. And poor Olive, clinging to her dream of perfect love, begins to see squalor in the whole set-up. Her grief is strangely touching. Olive is a grand character, shining with natural innocence and played with extraordinary sympathy by

June Jago; but when her idyll is finally wrecked (Mr. Lawler's idea seems to be that men must learn to be their age) why should the perpetual mistress in her be so outraged by the offer of marriage from the one man she loves—on the evidence surely a considerable concession from a Victorian cane-cutter?

The play starts very well, and only gradually loses its way. An excess of male heroics weakens it. All the same, it is packed with life, if sometimes crudely, and driven along with great vitality by its Australian cast. The author himself is excellent as the mercurial little man who worships his ox-like chum, Olive's beau, whom Kenneth Warren acts with authority. Madge Ryan is very funny—funny-pathetic—in the ravished gentility of Pearl, and there is a terrific performance by Ethel Gabriel as Olive's hard-bitten old mother, who has forgotten more about life than we can ever hope to know.

#### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

*King John* (Stratford-upon-Avon—1/5/57), pretty good. *Zuleika* (Saville—24/4/57), very nearly Dobson. *The Iron Duchess* (Cambridge—20/3/57), tonic Douglas Home. ERIC KEOWN



Douglas McBane—MURRAY DAVIS

David McBane—FRANK PEDDIE

[The Glass Cage



#### AT THE GALLERY

A SPATE of exceptionally attractive exhibitions is on view in London.

Of them the Arts Council is responsible for three of the best; a selection of Ingres drawings from the Ingres Museum at Montauban, Picasso Ceramics (both at No. 4 St. James's Square, closing May 18), and a selection from the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris at the Suffolk Galleries (Suffolk Street, closes May 18). Artists and others who feel passionately about good drawing will be glad that the Ingres selection (seventy out of the 4,000 at the Museum) consists mainly of figure studies for pictures in all states of development rather than the exquisitely finished but more familiar portrait drawings with which Ingres graced the honourable appellation of pot-boiler. M. Jernois, the Director of the Ingres Museum, in an admirably instructive foreword, says that the quality of these drawings is unequal. No doubt that is true. However, the standard is still high enough to produce a state of humility in any one of the many thousands who have ever sat down, pencil in hand, in front of a live model. Indeed from one painter of my acquaintance, a lifelong Ingres admirer, the show elicited the comment "If only they had shown a few bad ones!"

For those whose interest in Ingres has been awakened by this exhibition it is to be noted that the drawing of the female figure No. 18 is a study for the painting "Angelica," of which one version is in the National Gallery (although its situation there is not to be predicted in that

most changeable of institutions, whose watchword might well be "We are never entirely open").

Picasso's Ceramics show the Spanish magician in his happiest and most playful mood. Here there is a complete absence of that sinister undercurrent often present in his work which attracts some but which I personally find repellent. For sheer gaiety, however, the late Matisse at Suffolk Street sweep the board. One regrets that this most pleasing and popular of painters was not employed to rescue from dreariness some of the rich hotels and business houses of the world, instead of having his pictures juggled with like stocks and shares on the international market.

#### Recommended

*Looking at People.* South London Art Gallery, Camberwell. An interesting group including Ardizzone, Weight, Spear, Rea. (Closes May 15.)

ADRIAN DAINTREY

## AT THE PICTURES

*Funny Face*  
Oh, Men! Oh, Women!

THE first thing to be said about *Funny Face* (Director: Stanley Donen)—apart from the fact that I think it is terrific—is that it is not, and bears almost no relation to, the stage musical of the same title that older theatregoers will remember. It has some of the same Gershwin tunes, yes, including the title song; but it has also a number of new ones, and the lyrics are quite modern. If this news serves to keep away people who have fond memories of the stage show and hope to see it again, so much the better. One of the best things about this is that it is not and never could have been a stage show: it is a *film* musical, in grain. Most of those older theatregoers would probably hate it.

It is easy to recognize the commercial reasons behind the choice of theme: fashions, glamour, Cinderella-girl-into-star for the women, and astringent, disrespectful, funny comment on all these for the men. But the test, as I have said before, is the final result. I think few people capable of appreciating good song, dance, colour, design and fun could fail to delight in it.

The Cinderella girl here is Audrey Hepburn, a dowdy little bookshop assistant who is recognized by the dynamic editress of the glossy fashion magazine *Quality* as having a "funny" face—that is, interesting and intelligent, qualities unusual in the faces of the models normally employed to pose for the magazine's pictures. The girl is whisked away—much, at first, to her indignation—and turned almost by force into a fashionable beauty; the film is basically a string of excuses for her to

Re.



Jo Stockton—AUDREY HEPBURN

Dick Avery—FRED ASTAIRE

[Funny Face

appear in every possible kind of dress. The photographer who takes the required pictures is Fred Astaire, and they are soon in love. There's the framework of the story.

The details of the story are nonsense, as suits a musical, just as the artificial (and strictly nonsensical) infallibility of action and physical device suits it. I mean the way an apparently casual gesture or movement or throw goes exactly right, often to a climactic beat in the music. Similarly one doesn't bother about the conventional comic-paper simplification of "intellectual" life in Paris: an excuse was needed for Paris clothes and *boites*, that's all.

One accepts the excuses because of the result: a real *film* musical. The appearance of a new colour in the excellent (VistaVision, Technicolor) visuals is synchronized with a musical beat; a triptych screen shows us trios sung by people in different places; there is a charming number in the photographer's red-lit dark-room, at the end of which—each action in the process having been done during the song and dance—he presents her with an enlargement of her picture; and so on—there is no room to mention half the jewelled moments. Miss Hepburn is exquisite, Mr. Astaire has never been more on the beam, Kay Thompson as the editress is wonderfully funny, visually and musically the whole thing is a joy. I can only repeat—it's terrific.

I have left very little room to write about *Oh, Men! Oh Women!* (Director: Nunnally Johnson), but this in its

different way I enjoyed just as much. Never mind the unfortunate title; this is a "sophisticated" comedy (script by the director from the play by Edward Chodorov), and exceedingly funny. It depends much on the acting of the five principals—Dan Dailey, Ginger Rogers, David Niven, Barbara Rush and a newcomer, Tony Randall—and the comic invention in their dialogue; I defy anyone not to be helpless with laughter at the end of Dan Dailey's irreverent and bewildered synopsis of *A Doll's House*. But there are constant hardly less amusing visual effects—moments of genuinely fresh slapstick, like the sudden subsidence into the awkward chair, or the sudden *fall* into the room with the opening door ("How's that for an entrance?")—timed to perfection. Mr. Randall is brilliantly comic as the neurotic patient of a psycho-analyst. You may think neuroticism is not to be laughed at, but I'm not at all sure that isn't the best way of meeting it.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

About the most gripping and satisfying film in London is *Twelve Angry Men* (1/5/57); the most visually beautiful, *The Lost Continent* (24/4/57) and *Lust for Life* (20/3/57); among the funniest—but see above—*Designing Woman* (1/5/57); and *Yangtze Incident* (17/4/57) continues.

Nothing outstanding among the releases. *The Smallest Show on Earth* (24/4/57) is good fun, and *Interpol* (17/4/57) is good rousing thick-ear melodrama.

RICHARD MALLETT





## ON THE AIR

## Space and Power

AFTER seeing three of the B.B.C.'s four television "Portraits of Power" programmes I am hoping that the series will be extended. Biography is currently popular in any shape or form, and stories of the political giants of this turbulent century provide the younger generations with useful pegs on which to hang their first examination of "isms" and "ologies."

If the series can be amplified I hope that room will be found for some of the living giants: Mussolini, Lenin, Lloyd George, Kemal Ataturk and Smuts should obviously join Hitler, Gandhi, Roosevelt and Stalin in the B.B.C.'s Madame Tussaud's, but so too should Franco, Perón, Mao, Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill.

The programmes on Hitler, Gandhi and Roosevelt were all put together with skill. There is abundant film material to illustrate the life and work of modern political notoriety, and the job of selecting and pruning to a running time of about fifteen exciting and telling minutes cannot have been easy. The Hitler story contained a most impressive sequence—more eloquent than all the talk of garrulous elders—illustrating the frenetic, death-dealing attitudinizing of a Nazi Rally at Nuremberg, and the Roosevelt story showed pictures that made the Wall Street crash and New York's bread riots seem much less than a quarter of a century distant. The Stalin story was not quite so effective.

These pictures were linked by sensible, direct and appropriately elementary



[Men of Power]

GANDHI HITLER ROOSEVELT STALIN

narrative. Robert McKenzie (commentator and co-author—with producer, Huw Wheldon), Keith Latham and Norman James are to be congratulated on a splendid series.

I forecast here and now that astronomy will shortly become as popular as bird-watching has been since the war. It offers the same opportunities for escape from depressing diurnal fear and folly into a world of rare beauty and sanity. Within the next few years I expect to see sky-watching clubs springing up, star-maps in every newspaper, observation blisters fitted as essential equipment to most "U"-type houses, and vast stellar activity in the worlds of publishing and television. (Will all interested speculators please record their indebtedness to this column and set aside a reasonable rake-off?)

Television has embarked on a new

series of heavenly expeditions called "The Sky at Night," and in Patrick Moore has found a lecturer of immense enthusiasm and considerable powers of persuasion. His first talk suffered to some extent from over-exposure—that is, there was too much of Mr. Moore and not nearly enough of the heavens. It should be clearly understood by all astronomers aiming to popularize their subject that the general public is almost totally ignorant of the sky, knows nothing about the solar system and the movement of planets, even about the simple facts of night and day and the seasons. And it was a mistake of the first magnitude to cram the Arend-Roland comet, next month's eclipse, a general picture of the night sky in

April and a dissertation on solar illumination into the first fifteen minutes of the series. Take it slowly, please, Mr. Moore and Mr. Johnstone: the stars will be up there for a long time.

I saw very little of the Associated-Rediffusion play *Granite Peak* by Betty Roland, but quite enough to realize that a competent cast had an impossible task in trying to make the Northern Territory spring to life. This piece moved from one stock, overworked Hollywood situation to the next with unbelievable effrontery. Another A-R production, "Warhead," a close-up of the infernal machines of the cold war and their horrible implications, earns the highest praise from my viewing assistant. The brains behind this alarming and salutary excursion into the rocket zones were Peter Hunt, Jules Menken, and Cliff Owen.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



"What's new?"

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